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ABSTRACT

The pamphlet outlines programs provided by Bergen County (New Jersey) for gifted students. Initial sections provide information on definition of the term "gifted"; methods for identification; professional awareness and sensitivity to the gifted; and personal characteristics, strategies, and competencies of a teacher of the gifted. A final section reviews program strategies for gifted students from grades K through 11, including such alternatives as early admission to kindergarten, open ended curricula, and college courses and seminars. Also provided are lists of selected agencies, selected publications, instruments for gifted and talented student selection, and contacts for those interested in Bergen County programs. (SEH)

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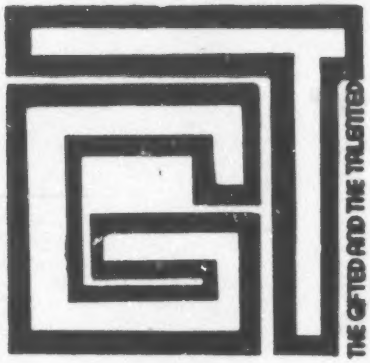

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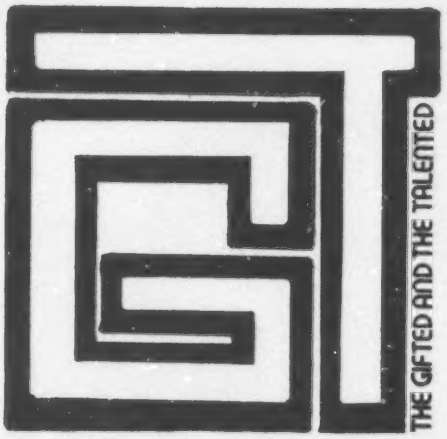

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INTRODUCTION

Historically, with few exceptions, gifted and talented children have only recently been considered as a group in need of special help. The prevailing thought has generally been that because of their exceptional capabilities, they will somehow succeed on their own. Fortunately, parents and educators have finally realized that these children not only need special attention, but more importantly, society needs their potential.

With the passing of the Public Education Act of 1975, the New Jersey Legislature moved toward insuring all children a "thorough and efficient" education. One of the specific mandates addressed to this end required that each educational program provide educational opportunities for exceptionally gifted and talented pupils. While programs for the gifted existed across the state of New Jersey prior to the enactment of T & E, the anticipated renewal of interest warrants a more systematic study of what can be offered to gifted children at all grade levels in all subjects.

It is undeniable that the growing literature on gifted and talented education is just beginning to be translated into operational practicalities. For example, while the proceedings of the first World Conference for Gifted Children held in London in September, 1975, (as reported in Gifted Children - Looking to their Future[1]) consisted of twenty-five papers by visiting speakers, only two were related to school programs. As at other conferences on

[1]Joy Gibson and Price Chennells, Gifted Children - Looking to Their Future, (London: The Anchor Press Ltd., 1975).

the gifted and in many publications, topics such as the philosophy of gifted education, the need for gifted programs, and the identification of gifted students are usually adequately covered. However, there is definitely a paucity of materials on the singularly essential topic of program development.

As reported in the Winter, 1975, issue of The Administrative Quarterly, few New Jersey school districts have adopted policies coordinating their district's efforts in this direction.[2] However, the study did reveal a degree of positivism that bodes well for the state's gifted and talented children. For example, only four percent of the responding superintendents state that children are grouped with little or no emphasis on individual achievement and ability. Apparently, the grouping of children by achievement and ability, although still controversial after decades of pedagogical debate, is a common practice throughout the state. The data also revealed that the precepts of continuous progress instruction and honors classes have been accepted and incorporated into the curriculum of approximately half of the responding school districts. Clearly, however, gifted programs should transcend continuous progress and honors classes.

It is our purpose in this pamphlet to outline programs that reflect a school district's concern for the gifted as an outgrowth of its commitment to best serve the individual needs of all its students. Accordingly, many program options described build on a school's existing curriculum, incorporate the philosophy of facilitating the optimum growth of every child, and thus establish a curricular framework that peaks with the gifted.

In this context, the Bergen County Committee on the Gifted, early in

[2]Gina Ginsburg and Joseph Mas, "What Are We Doing For Our Brightest Students?," The Administrative Quarterly, 4:3 (Winter, 1975).

its deliberations, accepted as a basic tenet the consideration of giftedness in the broad context of creating a greater awareness of all forms of individual differences in a school. As described in the study of gifted in England:

> Gifted children are like other children in one important respect: they are individuals and should not be thought of as a group, with common characteristics. In order to meet their needs, it is more useful to think of provisions for particular aspects of giftedness, than to attempt to provide for general giftedness.[3]

While programs, such as Saturday workshops, summer classes, and "Olympics of the Mind", tangential to the thrust of our existing or regular programs are of merit, our gifted can best be served through a comprehensive re-examination and upgrading of the total kindergarten through high school curriculum.

This pamphlet serves as an overview for those school districts interested in planning or expanding programs for their gifted and talented students. It is not intended to be a definitive work on gifted and talented education; on the contrary, it represents a brief summary of some of the findings on gifted and talented education related to definitions, identification techniques, characteristics and strategies of the teacher, K-12 program planning options, and selected references and agencies which serve as further resources.

The collaborative efforts of personnel from the Bergen County Office and Bergen County School Districts made this pamphlet possible. It is our hope that school districts will utilize any part of the pamphlet that may help them meet the needs of their own gifted and talented students.

[3]Department of Education and Science, HMI Series, "Gifted Children in Middle and Comprehensive Secondary Schools," (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1977).

WHAT WE MEAN BY THE TERM "GIFTED"

The term, "gifted," has often suggested an individual who possesses unusual intellectual ability. Intellectually gifted children tend to excel particularly in those areas that are closely related to academic superiority such as reading, language, mathematics, or other areas requiring abstract thinking and verbal ability. However, for many, the term, "gifted," also has other implications such as creative ability which stresses aspects of innovation, invention and imagination. These aspects may relate to intellectual ability, but may also be documented in achievement in other than academic areas such as the creative and performing arts.

The report to the Congress by the U. S. Commissioner of Education in 1971 broadened the concept of gifted by using the term, "gifted and talented". The definition given by the advisory panel for this report stated:

> Gifted and talented children are those identified by professionally qualified persons who by virtue of outstanding abilities are capable of high performance....children capable of high performance include those with demonstrated achievement and/or potential ability in any of the following areas, singly or in combination: (a) general intellectual ability (b) specific academic aptitude, (c) creative or productive thinking, (d) leadership ability, (e) visual and performing arts, and (f) psychomotor ability.[4]

Since 1972, leaders working in the field of the gifted have offered other definitions of gifted. For example: Dr. Joseph Renzulli of the University of Connecticut defines gifted as a combination of above average ability,

[4]Executive Summary, Education of the Gifted and Talented, Vol. I., Report to the Congress of the United States by the United States Commissioner of Education, 1971, P. XI.

task commitment and creativity.[5] Mr. Irving Sato, a former director of the National Leadership Training School in California, has noted four general areas where gifted abilities may be found: academic, kinesthetic, creative and psychosocial.[6] We, in New Jersey, realize that the definition of gifted can be within a very broad range and that the definition basically is dependent on the determination of the local school district.

Identification

One of the most important keys in dealing with the education of the gifted is early identification. Of equal importance is the recognition that gifted children are found in all segments of our society, among the handicapped, in working classes, poverty areas, rural areas, etc., and that each of these children must be identified.

A sound method for identification includes a planning design, an agreed upon definition, and specific criteria upon which identification can be based. Usually a combination of measures is suggested in trying to choose students who meet the selected criteria. The determination of these measures and the procedures by which they are used can result in a nominating and screening process. Because of limited resources, most districts may wish to utilize both subjective and objective measures already available to them.

These measures may include: Parental observations and interviews; teacher and administrative observations; peer-ratings; self-ratings; teach-

[5]Workshop by Dr. Joseph Renzulli, October 26, 1977. Holiday Inn, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

[6]Workshop by Mr. Irving Sato, December 8, 1977. Ramada Inn, Montvale, New Jersey. In the area of the psychosocial, Mr. Sato mentions not only the obvious leader as designated in the Commissioner's report, but also the individual who can respond to the needs of the group -- the healer, the server, the one who may become an outstanding minister, the social worker, etc.

er ratings; scores on standardized tests of intelligence, achievement, aptitude and interest; interpretation of cumulative records. Please refer to the Appendix A for a partial list of instruments.

PROFESSIONAL AWARENESS AND SENSITIVITY TO THE GIFTED

Over the years the teaching profession has become increasingly aware and sensitive to the needs of "special groups" of youngsters, and many new programs have been developed and implemented in attempts to meet these needs.

While awareness and sensitivity to the needs of gifted children have increased significantly, specific programs have been implemented slowly. This section of the pamphlet is intended to focus upon some of the needs and problems of gifted children.

The role of parents in being able to discern signs of giftedness and making this information known to the schools is of vital importance. Early stimulation by parents should be emphasized by the schools, and awareness to signs of giftedness could be imparted through such programs as parent-effectiveness training.

Much of the available literature would seem to indicate that the social and emotional development of gifted youngsters keeps pace with intellectual development.[7] While this may be the case, it should not be taken for granted. Education in the United States has emphasized the development of "the whole child", and this must also be the case for the gifted. When a youngster has been identified as being gifted, educators must not lose the perspective which addresses other needs. For example, gifted children, as

[7]Executive Summary, Education of the Gifted and Talented.

with all children, desire and must have the acceptance of peer groups. Although gifted children may have a tendency to seek out like peers, they must also have the ability to relate to a total society.

Another area of awareness relates to how the gifted may be perceived by their peers. The gifted may set very high standards for themselves and problems may arise when they expect others to achieve these same standards. This may be looked upon inappropriately as "elitism", but, nevertheless, is something that may have to be confronted. Difficulties may be encountered at home and in the classroom as the result of wild or exotic ideas and constant questioning. A barrage of questions may be irritating and cloud objectivity, but may be considered the product of an inquisitive, gifted mind.

Other problems may arise simply by virtue of the fact that many gifted children, as a result of their advanced intellect and reasoning abilities, have more of a concern for the attitudes of adults than other children. Educators, as well as parents, should be aware of the sensitivity that many of these younsters have to moral dilemmas such as war, hunger, etc., with which adults must deal. There should be sensitivity to the fact that these burdens, while realities, should not be permitted to dominate a child's thinking.

In addition, it is extremely important to recognize that giftedness may occur in one area and not in another, and that outlets must be provided for the child to express and pursue a specific gift to avoid problems that might develop (i.e. discipline, loss of interest in school, isolation). Gifted children should also be encouraged, without being coerced, to explore areas outside those of their own giftedness.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS, STRATEGIES, AND COMPETENCIES OF A TEACHER OF THE GIFTED

The lists of attributes frequently cited for teachers of the gifted are often the same as those for any good teacher. However, the demands on the teacher of the gifted are great and an outstanding teacher is essential for the success of such a program.

The teacher must:

- Possess an understanding of self and giftedness
- Be empathetic
- Have the ability to provide challenge rather than pressure
- Be concerned with the process of learning as well as the product
- Provide feedback rather than judgment
- Provide alternative learning strategies
- Provide a classroom climate which promotes self-esteem and offers safety for cognitive risk taking

In addition to outstanding professional qualifications, the teacher of the gifted should have specific competencies, such as:

- An awareness of the growing body of knowledge and research related to an education of the gifted
- A knowledge of specific models and strategies (i.e. Bloom's Taxonomy, simulation, group dynamics, independent study and creative problem solving) in order to plan activities which suit the needs of the gifted
- A knowledge of various means of providing for active participation of students in real life experiences and the ability to stress the necessary skills for such participation
- Knowledge of skills and strategies for developing creativity
- The ability to maintain a classroom climate that encourages initiative, inquisitiveness, originality, questioning attitudes, exploration and invention

The teacher is the key to meeting the needs of the gifted and talented. Because of personal characteristics, attitudes, interests, and professional background, some will be more suited than others to work with these children.

All teachers of the gifted and talented need not be gifted persons, but they must be secure and self-confident enough to accept a child's superior capabilities in an area and encourage even greater achievement. Individuals who demonstrate respect for the uniqueness, wide range of ideas, varied contributions and potential capabilities of the gifted and talented contribute much to the child's education.

PROGRAM STRATEGIES

This pamphlet includes program strategies that reflect a school district's concern for the gifted as an outgrowth of its commitment to best serve the individual needs of all its students. These strategies may be carried out within a variety of organizational settings and are based upon a comprehensive development of subject matter.

A number of provisions can be applied to gifted students at the elementary level. Whether they are placed in special classes, kept in regular classes, or served by other administrative and organizational arrangements, these programs comply with Mr. Irving Sato's program formula: Gifted children should meet with gifted children, they should be in contact with students of other abilities and also be given the opportunity to work by themselves.[8] Such provisions might include:

ELEMENTARY (K-8)

A. Early Admission to Kindergarten: Identification is based on children exhibiting advanced physical, mental and psychological maturity as measured by tests and interviews. A flexible entrance date is conducive to the gifted and talented child's educational development.

B. Continuous Progress Instruction: Materials, resources, and procedures are provided for the gifted and talented child to progress at his/her own pace. Such instruction in reading and math may provide a founda-

[8]Workshop by Mr. Irving Sato, December 8, 1977.

tion for the further development of gifted programs.

C. Honors Classes: These classes may be formed in a variety of areas; i.e., art, science, humanities. Class composition may vary. Criteria unique to the child and the subject matter may be used. This does not, in itself, necessarily mean a homogeneous group of children enrolled together for all purposes. The composition of an honors art class could differ markedly from an honors science class.

D. Open-Ended Curricula: Children receive inquiry related instruction. A variety of strategies may be implemented - independent study in disciplinary and interdisciplinary areas; "pull out" programs which permit children to investigate highly specialized themes; i.e., creative writing, aerodynamics.

E. In School and After School Activities: For years the best programs for the talented children were in this area. Their positive impact should not be minimized; i.e., choral groups, drama productions, art shows, school newspapers, chess, debating and math teams, ecology, computer clubs.

HIGH SCHOOL (9-12)

Many of the programming concerns applicable to gifted youngsters in the elementary grades continue to be of importance at this level. Gifted students still need the opportunities to work with other gifted children as well as to relate to the larger social setting of the high school. There are various strategies for arranging the instructional programs in Grades 9-12 which may flourish within the existing structure of the school and at the same time, provide the qualitative differentiation that is so vital to the gifted and talented child. Some of these strategies include:

A. Honors Sections in Subject Areas: These areas may be in the traditional academic subjects as well as in business and art. Attention should be given to the content of these courses and to the focus of their inquiry. Because of individual differences in all students, it should be possible for a student to take one or more honors courses and yet not be eligible to take others.

B. Advanced Electives: Special courses of an advanced or unusual content may be offered to gifted and talented children enabling them to explore areas not traditionally included in the high school curriculum. A consortium of neighboring high schools has proven to be effective in providing more electives to more students. (See Appendix B - Northwest Bergen Consortium)

C. Independent Study: Individualized studies may be planned which give the student opportunities for advanced learning and research on a topic which may or may not be a part of a school's curriculum. A teacher or team of teachers helps the student by facilitating access to resource materials, providing opportunities to report on his/her progress, and providing opportunities to present the results of the studies. Through independent study, a more thorough exploration of a topic may be undertaken and an investigation of a real problem may be activated. Independent study may involve an interdisciplinary approach, may involve activities commonly associated with enrichment, and may proceed at an accelerated pace.

D. Advanced Placement: A student may pursue a specific curriculum provided by the College Entrance Examination Board in a designated subject area. The content of the subject matter is on the level of a college

course. At the end of the year, the successful completion of an examination allows the student to elect a course of a more advanced nature in college or to choose from other alternatives.

E. The International Baccalaureate Program: This program, originating from Geneva, Switzerland, provides a two year study framework with a demanding curriculum. Although the program is outlined by the parent organization, it is flexible, and a school is permitted to write its own program capitalizing on the strengths and interests of the students involved. A diploma, issued to the graduating students, is recognized by major European Universities. The program also gives a full year of college credit for many North American Universities and colleges. Because of a well-developed curriculum content, advanced placement opportunities, and the stress on perspectives encompassing different cultures, additional challenges become available which keep our gifted and talented youngsters interested and working through the four years of high school.[9]

F. The Mentor/Tutorial: This format provides gifted students with the opportunity of working on an individual basis with other students who need supplemental or remedial help. Research findings support the use of such a strategy because of the degree to which students learn from their peers. The mentor/tutorial role enhances the gifted student's self concept and allows him/her to be engaged in meaningful and productive work while strengthening the bond among students.

G. Work-Study Program: Traditionally, these programs have been made avail-

[9]International Baccalaureate N.S. Inc., 888 Seventh Avenue, New York, New York 10019. 212-265-4215

able to students planning to enter the world of business or industry. The same design; i.e., part study and part on-the-job training, may be applied to our gifted and talented children for use in such areas as the performing arts and professional fields. Under the guidance of a mentor, the student has the opportunity to explore the pursuit of an interest and to find realistic outlets for his/her creative energy.

H. College Courses and Seminars: When a student is involved in an advanced state of study, administrative efforts are needed to facilitate procedures for making college courses and seminars accessible. This insures an extended resource base.

For examples of programs in Bergen County see Appendix B.

SELECTED AGENCIES

Area Service Center for Educators
Region 1, South
Governors State University
Park Forest South, Illinois 60466

Bergen County Superintendent
of Schools Office
304 Valley Blvd.
Wood-Ridge, New Jersey 07075
201-935-2990
Contact: Mrs. Sybil Nadel

EIC/Northeast
2 Babcock Place
West Orange, New Jersey 07052
Mr. Patrick Hill, Consultant
201-731-8400

ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped
and Gifted Children
The Council for Exceptional
Children
1920 Association Drive
Reston, Virginia 22091
800-336-3728

Gifted Child Society, Inc.
59 Glen Gray Road
Oaklard, New Jersey 07436
201-337-7058
Ms. Gina Ginzberg, Director

National/State Leadership Training
Institute on Gifted & the Talented
316 West 2 Street, PH-c
Los Angeles, California 90012
213-489-7470
Dr. David Jackson, Director

Office for the Gifted and Talented
U. S. Office of Education
Washington, D. C. 20202
Dr. Dorothy Sisk, Director

New Jersey State Department
of Education
Office of the Gifted and Talented
Box 2019
Trenton, New Jersey 08625
609-292-8777
Dr. Theodore Gourley, Jr.,
Coordinator

World Council on the Gifted and
Talented
47 Bellue Street
Carmichael, California 95608

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Barbe, Walter B. and Renzulli, Joseph S.
Psychology and Education of the Gifted
Second Edition
New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc. 1975

Education of the Gifted and Talented
Report to the Congress of the United States
by the U. S. Commissioner of Education
Sidney Marland, Jr. March 1972

Gallagher, James J.
Teaching the Gifted Child
Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc. 1964

Gowan, J. C. and Torrance, Paul
Educating the Ablest: A Book of Readings
on Education of Gifted and Talented Children
F. E. Peacock Publishers, Inc.
Itasca, Illinois 60143

Kaplan, Sandra
Providing Programs for the Gifted and Talented
Order from: Ventura County Superintendent of Schools Office
County Office Building
Ventura, California 93001
Attention: LT I Publications

Martinson, R. A.
The Identification of the Gifted and Talented
Office of the Ventura County Superintendent of Schools, 1974
Ventura, California 93001

Newland, T. Ernest
The Gifted in Socio-Educational Perspective
Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 07632
Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1976

Renzulli, Joseph S.
A Guidebook for Evaluating Programs for
the Gifted and Talented ($5.50)
Order from: Ventura County Superintendent of Schools Office
County Office Building
Ventura, California 93001
Attention: LT I Publications

APPENDIX A

INSTRUMENTS FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED PUPIL SELECTION

I. Intelligence Tests (individually administered)

1. WISC - R
2. Stanford-Binet
3. Slosson Intelligence Test
4. Peabody Picture Intelligence Test
5. Ravens Progressive Matrices

Intelligence Tests (group administered)

1. Otis Lennon
2. Lorge Thorndike
3. California Test of Mental Maturity
4. Oregon Academic Ranking Test
5. Ross Test of Higher Order Cognitive Processes

II. Achievement Tests (individually administered)

1. Peabody Individual Achievement Test
2. Wide Range Achievement Test
3. Durrell-Sullivan Reading Capacity and Achievement Test
4. Woodcock Reading Mastery Test
5. Slosson Oral Reading Test
6. Key Math Diagnostic Arithmetic Test

Achievement Tests (group administered)

1. Comprehensive Test of Basic Skill: Forms S and T
2. Iowa Test of Basic Skills (Primary Battery)
3. Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests: Readiness Sills
4. Metropolitan Readiness Tests: 1976 Edition
5. Metropolitan Achievement Tests: 1976 Edition
6. Stanford Early School Achievement Tests
7. Stanford Tests of Academic Skills
8. Iowa Tests of Basic Skills: Levels Edition

III. Creativity/Productive Thinking

1. Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking
2. House/Tree/Person
3. Rotter Internal External Control Scales
4. Test of Creative Potential
5. Rorschach

...continued

IV. Rating Scales

1. Renzulli-Hartman Scales for Rating the Behavorial Characteristics of Superior Students
2. Mary Meeker's Rating Scale for Identifying Creative Potential

V. Learning Styles

1. Myers Briggs Inventory of Type
2. Witkins Embedded Figures Test

APPENDIX B

These programs of Bergen County are listed as a means of providing contacts for those interested. The list may not be complete nor does it reflect our endorsement.

K-8

Allendale School District
Allendale New Jersey 07401
327-2020
Contact: Mr. Seibel, Superintendent

Englewood Cliffs School District
Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 07632
567-6151
Contact: Ms. Doreen Legg, Chairman of Child Study Team
Ms. Olive Vogel, Teacher, Independent Study Project

Fairlawn School District
5-01 Bergen Avenue
Fairlawn, New Jersey 07410
796-4750
Contact: Mr. Frank Montalbano, District Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction

Hackensack School District
355 State Street
Hackensack, New Jersey 07601
488-4100
Contact: Ms. Eleanor Russo

Haworth School District
Haworth, New Jersey 07641
384-5526
Contact: Ms. Deborah Levine, Teacher of the Gifted

...continued

K-8 cont'd.

Lodi School District
Lodi, New Jersey 07644
778-1213
Contact: Ms. Paula Fiduccia

Mahwah School District
Mahwah, New Jersey 07430
529-5000
Contact: Dr. James Evergetis, Superintendent

Northvale School District (Summer program)
Northvale, New Jersey 07647
768-0635
Contact: Mr. Ernest Mendillo, Principal

Norwood School District
Summit Street
Norwood, New Jersey 07648
768-6363
Contact: Mr. Frank Pallante, Administrative Principal

Paramus School District
Paramus, New Jersey 07652
261-7800
Contact: Each elementary school principal

Ramsey School District
266 East Main Street
Ramsey, New Jersey 07446
327-6800
Contact: Ms. Judith Bayles, Coordinator of Talented Pupil Program

River Edge School District
River Edge, New Jersey 07661
261-3408
Contact: Ms. Linda Dave, Teacher of the Gifted

Rutherford School District
176 Park Avenue
Rutherford, New Jersey 07070
939-1717
Contact: Ms. Dorothy Godlewski, (Saturday Program)

Teaneck School District
Teaneck, New Jersey 07666
837-2232
Contact: Ms. Lucy Stamilla, Director of Elementary Education

...continued

K-8 cont'd.

Wyckoff School District
Morse Avenue
Wyckoff, New Jersey 07481
891-1335
Contact: Ms. Janet Rosencrans/Betty Ermilio

Upper Saddle River School District
391 West Saddle River Road
Upper Saddle River, New Jersey 07458
327-4401
Contact: Ms. Rosina LaRusso, Learning Resource Center Teacher

GRADES 9-12

Hackensack School District
355 State Street
Hackensack, New Jersey 07601
488-4100
Contact: Mr. Harold Bloom, Principal

Northern Highlands Regional High School
Allendale, New Jersey 07401
327-8700
Contact: Mr. Gerald Hopkins, Superintendent

Northern Valley Regional High School
Closter Plaza
Closter, New Jersey 07624
768-6365
Contact: Dr. Edward Ciccoricco, Director of Curriculum and Instruction

Northwest Bergen Consortium
c/o Waldwick School District
155 Summit Street
Waldwick, New Jersey 07463
445-3340
Contact: Dr. Joseph Mas
Participating school districts:

Glen Rock
Mahwah
Midland Park
Northern Highlands
Ramsey
Waldwick

...continued

GRADES 9-12 cont'd.

Paramus School district
Paramus, New Jersey 07652
261-7800
Contact: Ms. Adele Stern, Vice-Principal

Park Ridge School District
2 Park Avenue
Park Ridge, New Jersey 07656
391-8000
Contact: Mr. Clayton Beyer

Ramapo Indian Hills Regional High School
Franklin Lakes, New Jersey 07417
891-1500
Contact: Mr. George DeFalco